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10/803,603

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Richard D. Dettinger

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IBM CORPORATION, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW
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EXAMINER

COLAN, GIOVANNA B

ART UNIT

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/803,603

Applicant(s)

DETTINGER ET AL.

Examiner

Giovanna Colan

Art Unit

2162

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 July 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-21 and 24-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-21 and 24-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is issued in response to applicant filed request for continued examination (RCE) on 07/06/2007.
2. Claims 1, 4, and 21 have been amended. No claims were added. Claims 2 – 3, and 22 – 23 were canceled.
3. This action is made Final.
4. Claims 1, 4 – 21, and 24 – 31 are pending in this application.
5. Applicant's arguments filed 07/06/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

6. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/11/2006 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 1, 4 – 21, and 24 – 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bays et al. (Bays hereinafter) (US Patent No. 6,519,603 B1, issued: February 11, 2003), in view of Setya (US Patent App. Pub. No. 2006/0111953 A1, filed: October 16, 2003).

Regarding Claims 1, and 21, Bays discloses a computer-readable medium containing a program for managing annotations having multiple states which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

creating an annotation record comprising one or more fields for storing annotation data (Col. 2, lines 20 – 28, “multiple annotations may be entered for a single annotable data item”, Bays) comprising the annotation;

retrieving annotation data stored in the annotation record (Col. 2, lines 33 – 36, “to retrieve either annotations related to specific database material or database material related to specific annotations”, Bays); and

applying a set of state rules to determine a first state of the annotation based on the annotation data (Col. 3, lines 25 – 30, Bays¹);

receiving additional annotation data (Col. 3 and 11, lines 53 – 56 and 7 – 11; “...The user, such as an author 27 (and/or the application 22) starts at block 205...”; respectively, Bays);

updating the annotation record with the additional annotation data (Col. 8 and 11, lines 14 – 19 and 7 – 15; “...selecting the data item to be annotated, and further enters the annotation content corresponding to a predefined annotation structure at block 210...”; respectively, Bays); and

applying the set of state rules to determine a second state of the annotation based on the annotation data in the updated annotation record (Col. 9 – 10, lines 12 – 14 and 59

– 65, and 12 – 17; “...When the annotation structure assignment is completed at block 150, the method 100 can proceed to decision block 155 (FIG. 3C). Optionally, the method 100 can perform a template transforming (or filtering) loop illustrated by blocks 155, 160, 165, 170, and/or an annotation propagation loop illustrated by blocks 175, 180...” and “...If the administrator 27 determines at decision block 155 that a filter and/or a template is needed, the administrator 27 enters a reader context, such as “Reservoir Engineer” (FIG. 2), as shown by block 160. The administrator 27 then specifies a corresponding reader template at block 165, and the method 100 inquires at decision block 170 whether templates for additional reader contexts are desired...”, respectively, Bays).

Bays also discloses: providing an indication (Col. 11, lines 34 – 36, Bays). However, Bays is silent with respect to an indication that the state has changed. On the other hand, Setya discloses providing an indication that the state of the annotation has changed from the first state to the second state (Page 6 and 21, [0110] and [0226], lines 10 – 13 and 1 – 7; respectively, Setya²). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the Setya’s teachings to the system Bays. Skilled artisan would have been motivated to do so, as suggested by Setya (Page 1, [0008] and [0009], lines 1 – 4 and 5 – 7, Setya), to provide a system, which can handle changes in the business enterprises; and to control data. In addition,

¹ Wherein the step of filtering and transforming the entered annotation corresponds to the step of applying a set of state rules as claimed.

² Wherein the step of updating to done corresponds to the step of changing the state of the annotation claimed.

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both of the references (Bays and Setya) teach features that are directed to analogous art and they are directed to the same field of endeavor, such as, databases management systems, status information. This close relation between both of the references highly suggests an expectation of success.

Regarding Claims 4, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein providing the indication that the state of the annotation has changed comprises notifying an entity (Page 6 and 21, [0110] and [0226], lines 10 – 12 and 1 – 6; respectively, Setya³).

Regarding Claims 5, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein notifying the entity comprises notifying an entity responsible for providing annotation data required to change the state of the annotation from the second state to a third state (Page 6 and 21, [0110] and [0226], lines 10 – 12 and 1 – 6; respectively, Setya).

Regarding Claims 6, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein:

the annotation record is associated with a particular annotation type (Fig. 2, item 50 and 88, “Field or Prospect” and “Status”, Col. 7, lines 19 – 22, Bays⁴); and

³ Wherein the step of deleting the tasks whose current status is done corresponds to the step of indicating as claimed.

⁴ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed.

the method further comprises retrieving the state rules based on a type of the annotation (Col. 7, lines 20 – 29 and 34 – 37, Bays).

Regarding Claims 7, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein the method further comprises:

generating an interface screen based on an annotation structure associated with the annotation type, wherein the annotation structure identifies the one or more fields (Fig. 2, item 50 and 88, "Field or Prospect" and "Status", Col. 6 and 7, lines 33 – 37 and 19 – 22; respectively, Bays⁵); and

receiving annotation data via the interface (Col. 6 and 7, lines 33 – 37 and 10 – 14; respectively, Bays).

Regarding Claims 8, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein the annotation record comprises a field indicating the current state of the annotation (Fig. 2, item 50, Status: Appraisal, Col. 7, lines 17 – 20, Bays).

Regarding Claims 9, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, further comprising initiating a process in response to detecting a change in the annotation state (Page 21, [0226], lines 1 – 7, Setya⁶).

⁵ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed.

⁶ Wherein the step of deleting the tasks corresponds to the step of initiating a process claimed; and wherein deleting corresponds to the process claimed.

Regarding Claims 10, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein the process examines a number of annotations in the same annotation state (Page 21, [0226], lines 1 – 7, “the tasks whose status is “done” from the task list 112”, Setya).

Regarding Claims 11, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein the process modifies the annotation data (Page 21, [0226], lines 1 – 2. “update to done”, Setya).

Regarding Claims 12, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein the process initiates another process (Page 21, [0226], lines 5 – 7, Setya⁷).

Regarding Claims 13, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method for managing annotations having multiple states, comprising:

defining a plurality of annotation types, each annotation type having one or more associated fields (Fig. 2, item 50 and 88, “Field or Prospect” and “Status”, Col. 6 and 7, lines 33 – 37 and 19 – 22; respectively, Bays⁸);

defining a set of state rules for each annotation type (Col. 7, lines 34 – 37, Bays), wherein each state rule identifies an annotation state based on annotation data in the

⁷ Wherein the step of showing the done list corresponds to the other process claimed.

⁸ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed.

one or more fields associated with its corresponding annotation type (Col. 9, lines 12 – 14 and 60 – 65, Bays⁹); and

providing a state machine capable of retrieving annotation data for an annotation of one of the defined annotation types (Col. 6, lines 45 – 51, “the annotations can be retrieved on the request of a user of, for example, a GUI application, or on the request of a software application running for example on a computer 4”, Bays), applying the state rules for that type to the annotation data to determine the state of the annotation (Col. 3, lines 25 – 30, Bays¹⁰), and providing an indication of the annotation state (Fig. 2, item 50, Status: Appraisal, Col. 7, lines 17 – 20, Bays).

Regarding Claims 14, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein at least one of the state rules for at least one of the annotation types identifies a state based on the presence or absence of data in at least one of the fields associated with that annotation type (Page 21, [0227], lines 24 – 27 and 30 – 32, Setya¹¹).

Regarding Claims 15, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein at least one of the state rules for at least one of the annotation types

⁹ Wherein the step of identifying the desired categories (Col. 9, lines 11 – 14, Bays) and further indicating which transformations applied to the annotation content (Col. 9, lines 60 – 65, Bays) corresponds to the step of defining a set of state rules for each annotation type as claimed.

¹⁰ Wherein the step of filtering and transforming the entered annotation corresponds to the step of applying a set of state rules as claimed.

¹¹ Wherein the step including the user selecting an icon by checking corresponds to the step of identifying a state based on the presence or absence of data as claimed.

identifies a state based on the presence or absence of data in at least two of the fields associated with that type (Page 22, [0227], lines 55 – 60, Setya).

Regarding Claims 16, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein at least one of the state rules for at least one of the annotation types identifies a state based on a specified string of text in one of the fields associated with that type (Page 21, [0227], lines 30 – 32, “selects the character sequence “attach” inside the task status table”, Setya).

Regarding Claims 17, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, further comprising:

providing annotation structures for each annotation type, wherein each annotation structure identifies the one or more fields for a corresponding annotation type (Fig. 2 and 3B, item 50, 89, and item: 135, “define annotation structure from categories” and “Field or Prospect”, Col. 7, lines 19 – 24, Bays¹²); and

generating annotation forms, based on the annotation structures, for receiving annotation data for each annotation type (Fig. 3C, items 160, 165, and 170, Col. 10, lines 12 – 17, a template, Bays).

¹² Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed; and wherein the different attributes of the view in the first row corresponds to the annotation structure claimed.

Regarding Claims 18, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method for gathering information about a plurality of processes of a similar process type, comprising:

providing an annotation form for receiving annotation data in a plurality of fields related to the processes (Fig. 3C, items 160, 165, and 170, Col. 10, lines 12 – 17, a template, Bays);

storing annotation data received via the annotation form in a plurality of annotation records (Fig. 1A, item 20, Annotation metadata store, Col. 2 and 7, lines 53 – 59 and 2 – 5; respectively, Bays), wherein each annotation record relates to one of the similar type processes (Fig. 2, item 50 and 88, “Field or Prospect” and “Status”, Col. 6 and 7, lines 33 – 37 and 19 – 22; respectively, Bays¹³);

providing a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation data in each record (Col. 9, lines 12 – 14 and 60 – 65, Bays);

applying the state rules to the annotation data in each record to determine the state of each annotation (Col. 3, lines 25 – 30, Bays¹⁴); and

generating a report indicating the state of each annotation (Col. 10, lines 26 – 33, Bays¹⁵).

Regarding Claims 19, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein each annotation record comprises a field for storing the current state

¹³ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed.

¹⁴ Wherein the step of filtering and transforming the entered annotation corresponds to the step of applying a set of state rules as claimed.

of the corresponding annotation (Fig. 2, item 50, Status: Appraisal, Col. 7, lines 17 – 20, Bays).

Regarding Claims 20, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a method, wherein at least one of the state rules defines an annotation state based on presence or absence of data in one of the fields (Page 22, [0227], lines 55 – 60, Setya).

Regarding Claims 24, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a computer-readable medium, further comprising notifying an entity of the state of the annotation (Page 6 and 21, [0110] and [0226], lines 10 – 12 and 1 – 6; respectively, Setya).

Regarding Claims 25, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a computer-readable medium, wherein the entity is responsible for providing annotation data required to change the state of the annotation (Page 21, [0226], lines 1 – 7, Setya¹⁶).

Regarding Claims 26, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses an annotation system, comprising:

one or more annotation structures, each identifying one or more annotation fields associated with an annotation type (Fig. 2 and 3B, item 50, 89, and item: 135, “define

¹⁵ Wherein the different views suitable for accountants, geologists, chemists, etc correspond to the report claimed.

¹⁶ Wherein the step of transferring the task done list corresponds to the step of providing annotation data claimed.

annotation structure from categories” and “Field or Prospect”, Col. 7, lines 19 – 24, Bays¹⁷);

an annotation store for storing annotation records (Fig. 1A, item 20, Annotation metadata store, Col. 2 and 7, lines 53 – 59 and 2 – 5; respectively, Bays), each having fields associated with one of the annotation types (Fig. 2, item 50 and 88, “Field or Prospect” and “Status”, Col. 6 and 7, lines 33 – 37 and 19 – 22; respectively, Bays¹⁸);

a set of state rules for each annotation type, wherein each set of state rules defines a plurality of states for each associated annotation type based on the annotation data in the one or more associated fields (Col. 9, lines 12 – 14 and 60 – 65, Bays); and

a state machine configured to access an annotation record (Col. 6, lines 45 – 51, “the annotations can be retrieved on the request of a user of, for example, a GUI application, or on the request of a software application running for example on a computer 4”, Bays) and apply the set of state rules for the corresponding annotation type to determine an annotation state based on the data stored therein (Col. 3, lines 25 – 30, Bays¹⁹).

Regarding Claims 27, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses an annotation system, wherein the system further comprises an executable component for

¹⁷ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed; and wherein the different attributes of the view in the first row corresponds to the annotation structure claimed.

¹⁸ Wherein the Field or Prospect corresponds to the annotation type claimed.

¹⁹ Wherein the step of filtering and transforming the entered annotation corresponds to the step of applying a set of state rules as claimed.

communicating a determined annotation state to an entity (Page 21, [0226], lines 4 – 5, Setya²⁰).

Regarding Claims 28, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses an annotation system, wherein the executable component retrieves the annotation state as a field in an annotation record (Fig. 41, status, Page 21, [0225], lines 1 – 10, Setya).

Regarding Claims 29, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses an annotation system, wherein the executable component retrieves the annotation state from the state machine (Fig. 41, status, Page 21, [0225], lines 1 – 10, Setya).

Regarding Claims 30, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses an annotation system, wherein at least one of the state rules associated with one of the annotation types defines an annotation state based on the presence or absence of data in at least one of the associated fields (Page 22, [0227], lines 55 – 60, Setya).

Regarding Claims 31, the combination of Bays in view of Setya discloses a annotation system, wherein at least one of the state rules associated with one of the annotation types defines an annotation state based on the presence or absence of a text string in at least one of the associated fields (Page 21, [0227], lines 30 – 32, “selects the character sequence “attach” inside the task status table”, Setya).

²⁰ Wherein the step of transferring corresponds to the step of communicating as claimed.

Response to Arguments

1. As stated in the Advisory Action dated 06/18/2007, applicant argues that Bays does not disclose; “applying a set of state rules to determine a first state of the annotation based on the annotation data.”.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. As stated in the Office Action dated 02/21/2007, the applied art Bays does disclose such limitation (Col. 3, lines 25 – 30, “Filtering and transforming the entered annotation content based on the context of the reader can be used to a retrieved only relevant information...to present the information in a form easily understood by the discipline or role of the reader...”, Bays). Wherein the step of filtering and transforming the entered annotation corresponds to the step of applying a set of state rules as claimed. Bays specifically discloses the step including “...based on the annotation data” (Col. 3, lines 8 – 10, “ the present method offers the capability to allow standardized structure of annotations based on the “group” to which the author and reader belongs, **as well as on the data item being annotated...**”; wherein the data item being annotated corresponds to the annotation data claims; Bays).

2. As stated in the Advisory Action dated 06/18/2007, applicant argues that the applied art Bays fails to disclose; “providing a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation data in each record”.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. The applied art Bays does disclose: providing a set of state rules defining a plurality of states for the annotation based on the annotation

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data in each record (Col. 9, lines 59 – 65, “specify a filter or modify a template to reflect the reader's context ...transformations that should be applied to the annotation content”, Bays; also see response to arguments #4 in the Office Action dated 02/21/2007).

Wherein, for example, the step of indicating which transformations should be applied to the annotation content implies that such transformations are applied based in part on the annotations content. Then such annotation content would correspond to the annotation data in each record as claimed.

3. As stated in the Advisory Action dated 06/18/2007, applicant argues that the combination of the references does not teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

Examiner respectfully disagrees. The combination of references does teach and suggest all the claim limitations (See - Office Action dated 02/21/2007, rejection of claims 3 – 5, 9 – 12, 14 – 16, 20, 24 – 25, and 27 – 31).

Conclusion

1. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

2. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Prior Art Made Of Record

1. Bays (US Patent No. 6,519,603 B1, issued: February 11, 2003) discloses a method and system for organizing an annotation structure and for querying data and annotations.
2. Setya (US Patent App. Pub. No. 2006/0111953 A1, filed: October 16, 2003) discloses a virtual knowledge management system.
3. Sabiers et al. (US Patent App. Pub. 2004/0150669 A1) discloses a graphical user interface for describing the state of a managed system.
4. Gupta et al. (US Patent No. 6,956,593 B1) discloses a user interface for creating, viewing and temporally positioning annotations for media content.
5. Altaman (US Patent App. Pub. No. 2004/0163042 A1) discloses a method and system for annotating documents using an independent annotation repository.
6. Horvitz et al. (US Patent App. Pub. No. 2003/0023623 A1) discloses a schema-based service for identity-based access to presence data.


Points Of Contact

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Giovanna Colan whose telephone number is (571) 272-2752. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Breene can be reached on (571) 272-4107. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Giovanna Colan
Examiner
Art Unit 2162
September 12, 2007


JOHN BREENE
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